1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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CHAPTER VII

RELIGION (CONTINUED)

WE have now described the fundamental ideas of the Vedda cult of the dead, but superposed upon these there are two other strata of belief both of which have influenced the religion of certain groups of Veddas to a greater or less extent. Before discussing these we may briefly indicate the views of the more thorough of previous investigators. In this as in other matters Knox was better informed than many of his successors when he said of the Veddas, "The *tamer* do build Temples, the wild only bring their sacrifice under Trees, and while it is offering dance round it, both men and women[1]." Tennant's account adds little to this; Bailey's account, undoubtedly the most complete and trustworthy that has been given to date, is not quoted here because it will be found almost in full on pp. 160 and 161 where the religious beliefs of the Nilgala Veddas are discussed. Tennant writes, "They have no knowledge of a God, nor of a future state...in short, no instinct of worship, except...when sick, they send for devil dancers to drive away the evil spirit, who is believed to inflict the disease. The dance is executed in front of an offering of something eatable, placed on a tripod of sticks, the dancer having his head and girdle decorated with green leaves. At first he shuffles with his feet to a plaintive air, and by degrees he works himself into a state of great excitement and action, accompanied by moans and screams, and during this paroxysm, he professes to be inspired with instruction for the cure of the patient[2]."

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 63.
[2] Tennant, *op. cit.* pp. 441 and 442.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Yaku, while at nearly all the village Vedda communities Indigollae Yaka was said to bring the *Nae Yaku*. Certainly Gale Yaka, Indigollae Yaka and Kande Yaka were all known by name, but there seemed much confusion between them all: perhaps Gale Yaka had become Lord of the Dead as he was invoked before the *Nae Yaku* in the same ceremony; Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka were invoked at a separate ceremony. No hint was given us that Gale Yaka and Indigollae Yaka were names for the same spirit, but of course this may have been so. The information that Indigollae Yaka was extremely powerful both to bring evil upon man and to help them to get game was, however, volunteered and, as already mentioned, some old, specially valuable beads were kept to be offered to him.

Gale Yaka was also invoked to give success when gathering honey; he appeared to be associated with a certain rock near Mahaella, and we were told that beads were worn during the ceremony.

The Maha Kiriamma was said to be one of the most powerful of the *Maha Yakino*, a class of female spirits who were said to send sickness[1]. Unapane Yakini (Unapane Kiriamma) was another *yakini* of the same class who was thought to live at Omunigala. Here as among many other groups of Veddas the *Maha Yakino* were associated with hill tops, and it was the custom for people collecting the honey of the rock bee to leave a piece of the comb *in situ*, saying, "Eat, O Kiriamma[2]."

When the *Maha Yakino* are invoked to cure sickness a basket is used in which are put a bead necklace and bangles and the leaves of a *na* tree. The shaman becomes possessed and raises the basket above the patient's head and prophesies recovery. The leaves are subsequently thrown away, but the beads and bangles are preserved for the *Yakino*. Presumably this is the origin of the similar or identical use of these objects in the *kolamaduwa* ceremony which, however, appears to be of Sinhalese origin.

[1] Nothing was ever said to cause us to suspect that she was connected with Gale Yaka or Indigollae Yaka.

[2] Kiriamma is in the plural in the Sinhalese, showing that all the *Maha Yakino* in the neighbourhood were invoked to partake.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Gange Bandar, unknown among the wilder Veddas but worshipped by all village Veddas, was known at Unuwatura Bubula.

OMUNI.

The history of this settlement dating back to the first half of the last century has been given on pp. 45 and 46. The Omuni folk believe there are spirits (*yaku*) everywhere in the jungle, but none have seen them; further, there are many *yaku* of each kind or species such as the Indigollae Yaku, the Dadayan Yaku and many others including the Gale Yaku called the Jungle Yaku, who do not, however, frequent the jungle around Omuni. It was said that Ganga Bandar Deyo who lives in rocks in the river is greater than any of these. Omuni was one of the first Vedda settlements we visited, and as the importance of Sinhalese and Tamil gods and demons was not then appreciated no questions concerning these were asked. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that the Kataragam God and other mighty *deviyo* are worshipped. The spirits of the dead (*Nae Yaku*) are believed to be associated with rocks; on the whole they are kindly spirits, but it is necessary to invoke and propitiate them.

A *Nae Yaku* ceremony is held some little time after a death has taken place, at which the shaman dances with an *aude* before a *maesa* on which is placed an offering of cooked yams and other food, and the *maesa* is decorated with special clothes kept for that purpose. The *aude* is held in the smoke arising from gum-resin thrown on glowing charcoal, and then pressed on the head of all the male members of the community. If this were not done little game would be killed.

We have an account of another ceremony performed to cure sickness and when the chena had been reaped, but it is not clear what spirits were invoked at this; presumably the most important of these were certain of the *yaku* other than the *Nae Yaku*, though the *Nae Yaku* may have played a subordinate part. A shed or very rough house is built and hung with special clothes reserved for this purpose, those shown to us being rather old and worn pieces of linen woven at Batticaloa. A roughly made shelf forming a sort of altar is built in the shed on which

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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755 the offering is placed. The dance is held at night and continues until morning when the whole community eat the offering, though only the men dance. We were shown a pot in a small cave near the settlement which was said to be kept there purposely, and which it was stated was used for boiling rice for the ceremony.

771 177 We may now consider the religious beliefs of certain communities in which the third stratum of belief already alluded to is dominant. Such communities are the village Veddas of Uva Bintenne and those of the Eastern Province and Tamankaduwa among all of whom the *Nae Yaku* were known and reverenced but the great Vedda heroes have all disappeared, their place having been taken by numerous Sinhalese gods and demons. Some of the village Veddas even build temples, rough bark or [346] mud huts like their own habitations in which the various symbols of the *deviyo* and *yaku* are kept and in which the shaman dances.

Such a temple was seen at Yakure dedicated to Gangu Bandar Deyo, here also were two rough stones leaning against [778] a tree on the *bund* of Yakurewaewa which were held sacred to Gane Deyo (Ganesa).

At a place called Nadena, where there were said to be Veddas until a few years ago, on the road running inland from Patrippu in the Eastern Province, there is a temple containing an image of Ganesa and this is looked upon as a Vedda shrine. Other temples or shrines in the Eastern Province are traditionally associated with Veddas though none survive at the present day, except, we believe, at Portiv near Patrippu and at Mandu.

VILLAGE VEDDAS OF THE BINTENNE.

775 115 At Dambani and the neighbouring settlements of Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the *Nae Yaku* are held to be of great importance. Reference has already been made on p. 5 to the difficulty of working with these village Veddas, and our information concerning the religious beliefs of the Dambani folk was obtained from the Arachi of Belligala; with regard to Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the little information we possess was obtained at first hand and carefully checked, and

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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KALUKALAEBA.

The most important spiritual agencies are the following:— Gange Bandar Deyo, Kataragam Deyo, Indigollae Yaka, Rerang Yaka, Riri Yaka (Sinhalese), Maruiu Yaka, Rahu Yaka, and Elie Yakini. 776

In spite of the fact that the people of Kalukalaeba keep cattle and are predominantly agriculturalists Gange Bandar Deyo, who lives on the hill Yangala beyond Hemberewa and gives luck in hunting and honey gathering, was said to be especially important. He is invoked when game is scarce, but it is the Kataragam God who gives increase of yams and vegetable food. They do not dance to him but make offerings of cooked brinjal and pumpkins, which are left for half-a-day on a rude altar and then eaten. Chena are also under the protection of the Kataragam God to whom offerings are made after the produce has been reaped, some of every kind of fruit being cooked and exposed in the chena for some hours before it is eaten by the people. 776 782

At Kalukalaeba Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka and Bambura Yaka were unknown. The spirits of the dead are recognised as the *Nae Yaku*, but they are certainly thought of as far less important than a number of other spiritual beings to be immediately considered. They are however invoked, but it seemed that this was not done habitually immediately after a death, but at quite uncertain intervals to remove sickness. The father of 775 755

and Bintenne, and Nilgala, alike agree that he was a great and powerful prince. They speak of him often, and call him Barangala Kimbul-Herat mudiyanse Rajapat Wannimache. From the name Herat it is manifest he headed some great political movement.... Raja-pat probably means king-maker, and the whole title may be translated as 'His Excellency the General Kimbul-Otbe of Barangala, the king-maker Lord-of-the-Marches,' or else the 'King-made Lord-of-the-Marches,' wanni, literally a forest or waste, being used exactly as we use the term 'marches,' of Wales or Scotland. The respect of the Sinhalese, and this elaborate title of highest honour, show that this great Vaedda Chieftain headed an army that replaced one of the Sinhalese kings upon the throne of his ancestors. I think it is more probable he figured in a comparatively modern war than in a very ancient one....It is perfectly likely that Kimbul-Otbe was a prince of the Sinhala royal family, who married a Vaedda....

"The supposition that Kimbul-Otbe was a Sinhala, and that he married either a Bandara or an Unapana lady, would thus account for the otherwise unexplained fact that the Sinhalese say some of their oldest and best families also descended from Kimbul-Otbe, though they did not know whether he was really a Vaedda or was claimed by the Vaeddas in mistake, having been their prince." *Op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 176.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the present shaman was called Suwanda, and no dance to his spirit was held till a long time, perhaps as much as a year, after his decease. But when the shaman's mother became ill he was invoked and offerings were made, with the result that the patient got well. In connection with this it was explained that it was not unusual for the *Nae Yaku* to make even their nearest and dearest relatives ill for the sake of the offerings they would then receive.

It was stated that the *Nae Yaku* are not allowed to kill people but only to make them ill, permission to do this and to accept offerings being obtained from Kataragam Deyo, Saman Deyo, and Numeriya Deyo. We could not ascertain with certainty whether the *Nae Yaku* have anything to do with sending luck in hunting, but if they are concerned in this they clearly play quite a subordinate part. When taking honey a little is left at the foot of the tree, this was said to be for the *Nae Yaku*, who may be called to it by some such expression as "here is honey, be pleased to eat[1]."

A female spirit Elle Yakini is invoked when a woman is pregnant, to protect mother and child; beads which belong to the shaman, who seems to keep them for this purpose, are placed on a piece of cloth and invocations are spoken. After childbirth a bower apparently resembling the *kolamaduwa* is made, Elle Yakini is invoked and an offering of food made to her. At the time of our visit it was said that a dance would shortly be held to Elle Yakini in thanks for having given a woman, who at first had difficulty in nursing her child, an abundant flow of milk. Elle Yakini will be invoked with an ordinary hunting arrow, and when possessed by her the shaman will gasp out some such formula as this "Now I have made you well, remember me in future." Offerings would not be made to Elle Yakini until her help was again needed.

ELAKOTALIYA.

The most important spiritual agencies are the gods and demons who are worshipped at Kalukalaeba. Indigollae Yaka is said to give good luck to hunters, for neither Kande Yaka,

[1] The geographical position of Kalukalaeba allows the Veddas of this group no opportunity of collecting rock honey.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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a piece of flesh is offered to the *Nae Yaku* who are called by name, and then the Veddas eat it themselves.

Vihara Deyo is considered to send sickness, and he is invoked to make men whole again. Rice is cooked with milk usually obtained from the Tamil village of Horawila, and this with betel and areca nut is put upon a *maesa*. Only the shaman dances, and after the ceremony the offering is eaten by the whole community, including the sick man. Our informant did not know how the *yaka* or *deyo* causing the sickness was discovered, that being left to the shaman.

YAKURE.

The important spiritual agencies are:—Gange Bandar Deyo, Genikandia Deyo, Palugamman Deyo, Vihara Deyo, Mangara Deyo. Our informants knew of Indigollae Yaka but did not know if he ever was a man or had always been a spirit. Nothing was known of Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka, or Bambura Yaka. Dead shamans are thought to become *yaku*, and it is the spirits of these people who are the *Nae Yaku*: the fate of the spirits of ordinary folk is uncertain, but they do not become *Nae Yaku*. The *Nae Yaku* are danced to and invoked with the other *yaku* in order to cure sickness, but apparently they are not considered particularly important. A *maesa* is made and a cloth put over it, and on it are laid flowers of many kinds, betel leaves and areca nuts. Incense is burned before these offerings, in front of which the shaman dances facing the east. In some instances the *maesa* is built inside the temple, the shaman holds a cloth in his hand and a pot of rice cooked in milk is placed by the *maesa* on a rice pounder[1]. This is not tasted during the dance, but is eaten afterwards by the shaman and the sick man and other individuals of the community[2].

Kataragam Deyo is invoked especially to protect the chena, and at harvest an offering is made which is afterwards eaten as at Elakotaliya.

[1] It must be remembered that Yakure is a great cattle breeding centre.

[2] This is an interesting contrast to the practice which Mr Parker informs us prevails in the south of the island, where food given to spirits is not eaten at all but is exposed in the jungle or some deserted place. The fact that at Yakure food offered to spirits, many of whom are of Sinhalese or Tamil origin, is eaten, is clearly a remnant of the Vedda belief that the spirits invoked are in the main beneficent.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Mangara Deyo is invoked to protect cattle. About a month before our visit a nephew of the shaman suffered from headache and fever and woke up in the middle of the night in a great state of alarm. It was ascertained by stone augury that Mangara Deyo had sent the sickness, offerings were made to him, and the youngster speedily recovered.

There are no dances at a man's death or invocations to the spirits of the dead, nor did there appear to be any particular spirit who gave luck in hunting, indeed it seemed that game was little sought, the whole activity of the community being concentrated on cattle breeding.

The temple of Mangara Deyo is a small bare hut, with the roof projecting a few feet beyond that wall in which the door is cut. The inside of the temple is quite bare except for a narrow wooden rack about a foot wide which runs round the two side and back walls at a height of about four feet from the ground. In one corner of this was a pile of *aude* of all shapes and sizes which were said to belong to Mangara Deyo.

ROTAWAEWA.

Mr G. W. Jayawardene writes as follows concerning the beliefs of the Tamankaduwa "Veddas" described on p. 56. "They regard Adukganna Hulawali Yaka and Vedi Yaka as the important *yaku*. Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit to whom they look to be cured of sickness. When any one is ill he or she or someone on their behalf puts aside one or two cents which are wrapped in a clean piece of cloth and from each house an offering of food is made. Vedi Yaka is the spirit they look to for help in getting game. When an animal is killed the heart is taken and roasted and offered on a stick with the end split into four to hold the heart under a tree." Commenting on this Mr B. Horsburgh writes, "Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit of a Vedda who was killed by King Mahasena for refusing to leave Minneriya tank when he was going to restore it. The name Adukganna Hulawaliyaka means Hulawali Yaka who takes the *adukkuwa* or present of food (from the offering made to him). He is only seen in dreams,

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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drinking after the kill. After a little more dancing the shaman fell back into the arms of his supporter and the spirit left him.

The Kirikoraha at Unuwatura Bubula. When dancing to Kande Yaka at Unuwatura Bubula the Veddas made a *bulatyahana* (Plate XXXV); this, we were told, would be built when invoking many *yaka*, but the *kirikoraha* would never be danced without it. The *bulatyahana* seemed to be an elaborated *maesa* with the framework carried up to form a back and slanting roof over which a cloth, specially kept for this purpose, was hung and fastened down. On the shelf of the *bulatyahana* two *aude* and a trident of the ordinary Hindu pattern were placed together with betel leaves and areca nut. The *kirikoraha* containing coconut milk and betel leaves stood on a rice-mortar beside it and a pot of cooked rice was put on the ground.

The shaman danced in front of the *bulatyahana* holding in his hands a new piece of cloth (a coloured handkerchief which we gave him) specially obtained for the purpose. He swayed his body and raised the cloth to his head while lifting his feet and patting the ground alternately with his right and left foot, but not moving from the front of the *bulatyahana*, that is to say confining his dancing to a space three or four feet long. He exchanged the handkerchief for the trident and placing a betel leaf on the point he danced with this and soon became possessed by Kande Yaka. Putting his hands into the *kirikoraha*, he examined the milk and expressed his satisfaction by shouting and clapping his hands. Again he danced to and fro in front of the *bulatyahana* with the trident in his hand. The *kirikoraha* was taken off the rice-mortar and put on the *bulatyahana*, and the pot of cooked rice was put in its place on the rice-mortar.

The dancer then approached a sick shaman who, as mentioned on p. 263, had coughed up a considerable amount of blood at the end of the *alutyakagama* ceremony performed previously, and fed him with some rice which he brought to him in a betel leaf. In this way Kande Yaka showed his benevolence towards the sick man, for it was considered that the *yaka* food would cure him. Returning to the *bulatyahana* the shaman quivered and shook his head and examined the

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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796 returning to Nila and giving him their *kaduwa* to hold. This they did because they wanted to put them down, and they considered them too sacred and dangerous to be put on the ground, or even to be held by anyone who was not a grown man who had frequent intercourse with the spirits.

796 Handuna took the necklace from the *wilkoraka* and showed it to one of us (B. Z. S.), to whom he gave it, asking for a red necklace instead of the bast one. Kaira followed Handuna and gave to each of us betel leaves from the *wilkoraka* as a sign of favour from the youngest of the Rahu Yaku. Then both went to the *maesa*, looked at the offering, and then fell back into their supporters' arms. We were told that the *yaka* was well pleased with the offering and was about to depart from them, but Nila sang the invocation and soon the two dancers began to tremble and shake their heads, then shouting hah! hah! they sprang forward and danced again. They picked up their *kaduwa* from the *wilkoraka*, where they had been put for safety, this being considered a sufficiently sacred spot. Using the leaves which formed the hilts of their swords, they scooped out the coconut milk from the *wilkoraka* and scattered it about, and those on whom it happened to fall considered themselves lucky. Then the *yaka* spoke to Nila saying that he wished to go, and Nila answered "It is well." But before the *yaka* left Handuna and Kaira, the two men danced toward that side of the cleared spot where the women and children were grouped together, raising their *kaduwa* and pointing at the group. One woman was carrying a baby suffering from yaws, and Handuna held his *kaduwa* over the child's head and promised that its sores should be cured. Then Handuna and Kaira gave their *kaduwa* to Nila; both bent their heads over the *maesa* and the *yaka* left them.

796 The necklace was replaced on the *wilkoraka* which was put with the *kaduwa* on the *maesa*. Handuna and Kaira repeated a charm over them and all were removed from the *maesa*. Handuna picked a few leafy twigs, put them under a tree, then took the leaves from the *kaduwa* and placed them on the freshly picked leaves, so that the hallowed leaves might not touch the ground; he then poured the remains of the coconut milk from the *wilkoraka* over them.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5. (1907-1908) 1911
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796 535 786 Yakini, who live on a hill called Milalanegala. This Vedda danced in very much the same way as Wannaku had danced, and the few differences noted, such as his less energetic steps, were doubtless due to personal idiosyncrasy. However, he did not bury his head in the leaves tied to the central post on becoming possessed, but shook the leaves which he held in his right hand in his own face, having previously struck these against those pendant from the *ruwala*. After dancing for a short time he staggered up to Wannaku and spoke, the spirits possessing him asking why they were called and whether there was sickness amongst the people. To this Wannaku answered "No," telling the spirits that he had called them at the request of the white man who wished to know them. After this the celebrant again danced in and out of and round the *ruwala*, striking at the pendant leaves. Soon he buried his head in the leaves tied to the central post, his whole body quivering, then he quickly jumped away from the pole and made his way to the Ratemahatmaya of the district, who was an onlooker, and shook the leaves in his right hand against the latter's chest, telling him he would be successful in the business he was about to undertake. This was in answer to a question that the Ratemahatmaya had shouted a short time previously. There was more dancing round the central pole, the performer striking it with the leaves which he held in his hand; after a few minutes he approached Wannaku, and striking him with the leaves said something, and again danced round the central pole which he seized in his hand and shook four times, once facing each of the cardinal points of the compass, shouting loudly as he did so. This was the means adopted by the *yaku* to test the solidity of the structure. We were told that this dance was generally performed in order to cure sickness, and if the pole fell or the structure came to pieces the patient for whose benefit it took place would die or others would become ill. At last with many quiverings and clutchings at the central post the *yaku* took their departure.

[illegible] 555 787

796 535 A similar dance lasting a shorter time, during which the dancer was possessed by Moranegala Yaka, then took place, after which Wannaku, who appeared to have quite recovered

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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from his previous fatigue, invoked Walimabagala Yaka and Yakini. The dancing of these *yaku* exactly resembled that described at the beginning of the ceremony, and is therefore not further recorded.

THE KOLAMADUWA CEREMONY.

It seems very doubtful whether the *kolamaduwa* as it exists at the present day should be described as a Vedda ceremony at all, though as it was danced by the Henebedda Veddas at Bendiyagalge it merits a description. It is in any case certain that the *kolamaduwa* is not often performed, as the amount of food and other properties necessary could scarcely have been found by one small Vedda community[1]; also its main objects, the curing of disease in cattle and epidemic sickness among men, would not appeal greatly to small communities of hunters dwelling in healthy surroundings. At the present day the Henebedda Veddas make rough chena and herd cattle for the Sinhalese, but the cattle have not yet become an important factor in their lives, and the people themselves do not suffer from epidemics. Further, at Bandaraduwa, on the borders of the Eastern Province, the only other place where this dance was known among Veddas, we were told that they would perform it for the Sinhalese, and that each dancer would be paid Rs. 5 for his trouble besides being given his food. Our aged Sinhalese informant, mentioned on p. 31, told us that the *kolamaduwa* was not danced by these Veddas when he was a boy, and that he considered it had arisen as an elaboration of the *ruwala* ceremony which used to be performed in those days. The *ruwala*—already described in this chapter—itself shows signs of having been introduced from the Tamils of the east coast, though probably at a comparatively remote period. Great numbers of *yaku* and *yakini* should be invoked at the *kolamaduwa*; some,

[1] According to Tissahami all the following offerings were necessary for a full ceremony. Eight measures of rice and two large pots in which to cook it, 10 coconuts, 5 bundles of yams, 30 plantains, 2 sugar canes, 200 betel leaves, 12 candles, 1 lb. sandal wood, 100 balls of jaggery, ½ lb. turmeric, 1 lb. of resin, 4 coloured cloths, 5 yards of white cloth, 4 necklets of beads, 8 small baskets and 8 cloths to cover them, 4 pairs of metal bangles, 1 bottle of ghee and flowers of various kinds.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the spirits of people who frankly were not Veddas, such as Peradeniya Bandar; others, spirits of men like Panikki Vedda already referred to, famous for catching elephants and buffaloes, who were Veddas in little more than name. Others, if Veddas in name, yet behaved like Kandyan chiefs, if we may judge from their deeds quoted in the invocations, such as building dagabas and bringing paddy fields under cultivation. Some of the Maha Yakini are regarded as the wives of such chiefs, and Unapane Kiriamma is in this community regarded as the wife of Unapane Wanniya, the chief who first brought the paddy fields at Unapane under cultivation.

THE KOLAMADUWA CEREMONY AT BENDIYAGALGE.

This was admittedly not a full ceremony. Although the bower was built the correct offerings were not made nor were all the *yaku* invoked, and a disturbance which took place the next evening was said to be due to the anger of the *yaku* on account of the lack of offerings (see p. 125). Plate LIII, fig. 1 shows the *kolamaduwa* with bunches of leaves hanging from the horizontal bars of the framework and a circle of leaves called *kolavegena* suspended from the centre, that is, the crossing of the horizontal bars. The shaman, Sita Wanniya, Randu Wanniya and Kaira, holding bunches of leaves in their hands, walked round the circle within the upright posts while they sang an invocation to the *yaku* to come to the leaves of the *kolamaduwa*. Soon they began to dance (Plate LIII, fig. 2) with the usual step, gently at first, but gradually swaying and bending more and more they brushed the leaves of the *kolamaduwa* with those they held in their hands at each step.

A basket covered with a cloth had been placed on a tripod in one corner of the bower, and this should have contained various offerings for the *yakini*, including flowers and beads; not having either to offer, a few leaves had been put in it. Sita Wanniya seized this basket called *pakudama*, and danced with it in both hands, then after a short time he shouted "Ah, ah!" and became possessed by the Maha Yakini. When the Sita

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and we do not doubt that it occurred formerly, but we could hear of no recent instance in which Veddas alone officiated.

This did not surprise us for we met with no Veddas who knew these long invocations, and we believe that this practice must have ceased throughout the Vedirata at least two or three generations ago. The necessary conditions existed in those days when, as we were assured, there were communities of village Veddas with shaman of repute such as no longer exist, and we may instance the history of Lindegala given on pp. 171 and 172 as a case in point. Nevertheless the custom survives in a modified form, for Tissahami with three Veddas performed a *kolamaduwa* ceremony at Damenegama in 1903 with the object of stopping an epidemic, alleged to be dysentery, which was then raging in the neighbouring villages.

A very large number of spirits are invoked, but as has been indicated in Chapter IX Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka, and the *yaku* of the recent dead were not of the number. This demonstrates that the ceremony as it at present exists is essentially foreign, and therefore the length and nature of the three invocations given are not surprising. The invocation to Unapane Kiriamma which recites her deeds agrees well with all we could find out about her independently, and suggests that these invocations arose among such settled village Veddas as those mentioned in the Sinhalese chronicles referred to in the first chapter.

The four invocations written down by Tissahami were discussed at length with him, the shaman of the Henebedda Veddas sitting with us, though as this man—a half bred—knew only parts of these invocations and greatly admired Tissahami, the translations obtained in this way only represent the opinion of Tissahami, and presumably that of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas from whom he learnt them in his youth. In these circumstances it is not surprising that two of these translations differ considerably from those furnished by Mr Parker, and this difference is so great in the invocation (No. XXXIX) which should be sung while the leaves are being slashed from the *kolamaduwa* (cf. p. 269) that we have thought it best to give our field version as well as Mr Parker's translation. Some of the allusions, for instance, the reference to the shark contained in the first portion

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the inhabitants of Gongolla a primitive jungle village some 20 miles from the coast in the Eastern Province[1].

When the dance, of which we saw a partial rehearsal, is about to take place the inside of the temple is decorated with cloths and the green branches of trees including coconut leaves, and the model of the boat which commemorates the arrival of Kapalpei is hoisted to the top of the tall pole standing outside the temple. If the dance is undertaken in order to cure a sick man, milk is placed in the pot which is supported on the rough stand (fig. *Y*) mentioned above. The sick individual, and probably the dancers, are fed from this and at the end of the night's dance the last portion is thrown out into the jungle for Kapalpe.

The dancers should wear a petticoat made of strips of coconut leaves and green leafy twigs of other trees, and it was stated that the ministrant wore these just as did the other dancers. After the dance a number of these ceremonial garments are preserved in the temple where they are allowed to dry. Rice, plantain and chewing material are piled on the *kudaram* during the ceremony and camphor is burnt. Kapalpe sees the food provided and the honour done him and is propitiated.

The stone *pilliyar* has been frankly adopted from the Tamils though Mr Kumarakulasinghe pointed out that no sacred Tamil stone was so rough[2]; further, according to the same informant Tamils do not dance round either *pilliyar* or *kudaram*.

At Kalkudah it was said that there was a special "priest" or ministrant whom we did not see. We gathered that in some way he officiated in connection with the land cultivated by the community and he perhaps corresponded to the Sinhalese *gamarale*.

Some idea of the actual character of the ceremony and of the nature of the *kudaram* and pole can be derived from the dance rehearsed for our benefit at Vakarai. Plate LXX, fig. 1

[1] Cf. Brenda Z. Seligmann, "A Devil Ceremony of the Peasant Sinhalese," *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.* Vol. XXXIX, 1909.

[2] This may be true of the Tamils of the east coast, but we have seen some shrines containing equally rough stones set up by Tamil coolies on plantations. Worship may be performed at such shrines, offerings of rice and chewing materials being made at them and afterwards eaten.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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differ from the Singhalese, and those which, though Singhalese, are, in the sense here used, peculiar to the Veddahs. It has been suggested to me that some of the former are derived directly from the Sanskrit, but as I am incompetent to judge of the accuracy of these suggestions, I do not venture to give the conjectural derivations which I have received.

I have, myself, noted down, and caused to be noted down from dictation, several Veddah charms, which are not, I am informed, known to the Singhalese, though in some there is a certain resemblance to charms in use by the latter. Whether corrupted during the many ages in which they have been unintelligently repeated, or whether they are in a form of Singhalese now obsolete, or both, they are not easily translated. They are charms used in illness, and for protection against elephants, leopards, bears, and wild boars.

The Veddahs are at present chiefly known by names similar to those in use among the neighbouring Singhalese, and it is curious to observe how oddly they are jumbled together. In one family are to be found names which would only be appropriate to Kandyans of the highest caste, and names which could only be borne by the lowest. Some of their names, too, belong to Hindoos, and not to Singhalese. Some are not proper names at all; while, most strange of all, others, though utterly unknown in Ceylon, either to Tamils or Singhalese, are in common use in Bengal, and refer directly to Hindoo deities, or personages mentioned in the Puránas.

The names of the preceding generation appear to have differed in a very marked manner from the Singhalese names by which the Veddahs now are for the most part known; and those in the list appended to this paper are chiefly the names of the fathers and mothers of the present Veddahs. Most of these I was able, by the kindness of Colonel Vincent Eyre, C.B., R.A., to submit to the inspection of Professor Lees, of Bengal, and they are pronounced by him to have a decided Sanskrit affinity.

It is a singular and significant fact, that not only are many of their names unknown in Ceylon, but their meaning is utterly unintelligible to the Veddahs themselves, among whom they were family designations which have descended to them from father to son for ages.

It is strange that so many have written of the Veddahs, and have been contented with information at once scanty and inaccurate. Davy believed that they had no names.* Tennent affirms that they have no charms—no "instinct of worship"—and doubts

* Davy, *Account of the Veddahs*, p. 115 of his work.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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no idols, offer no sacrifices, and pour no libations. They cannot be said to have any temples, for the few sticks sometimes erected, with a branch thrown over them, are, I imagine, simply to protect their votive offerings. [782] [796] [346]

They have no system of medicine, though they will accept medicine when given. In cases of sickness they sprinkle water on the patient, invoking their deceased ancestors to heal him. Sometimes they simply utter the name of spirits as they dance round the sick man. Sometimes a garland of flowers is offered to the spirit who has afflicted him.* They believe in the efficacy of what are called devil dances, but are ignorant of the art of a Kattadia, or devil dancer. I can find no trace of metempsychosis, so universal amongst Buddhists. [755] [769] [775]

I have now described what is the *actual* religious belief, if it can be so called, of the Veddahs; and it was only by dint of often repeated visits among them, and very careful inquiry, that I succeeded in obtaining the particulars I have recorded. [771] [774]

But, that at some period of their history they had some knowledge of a more "systematized" faith, their charms and invocations, some of their customs, and the very names they bear, seem conclusively to prove.

Such testimony is invaluable. For neither the inquirer, whose zeal may induce him to jump too hastily at conclusions, nor the people themselves, can distort it, or give it a strained interpretation. But this evidence all points to something long past, to a faith once, at least, familiar to them, but now forgotten. At the least, it indicates a former contact with civilization, and proves that they have a history more full of incident than would belong to a race which was always as barbarous as it is now.†

In their charms the sun and moon are frequently invoked, although in their daily life neither luminary is respected.‡ [821]

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* They invoke the Gal-Yakko, spirit of the rock; Weldo-Yakko, spirit of the chase; Oonapāna-Yakko, of whom I have no knowledge; and the shade of their great-grandmother. They also propitiate "Maha-Yakkhini", who appears rather an evil personage. It is to her that they offer a garland of flowers. They describe her as a "foreigner", and say that they know nothing about her, but acquired their awe of her from the Singhalese. The Weddi-Yakko is known to the Singhalese; hunters offer flowers, blood, and burnt meat to this spirit, before hunting, to secure their success. Oonapāna-Yakko is known to the Singhalese of the Weddirates, but I do not think he is generally known to the Singhalese.

† Vide Tennent's account of the Veddahs, especially vol. ii, part iii, chap. ix, p. 441-2. "They have no knowledge of a God, nor of a future state, no temples, no altars, prayers, or charms; in short, no 'instinct of worship' except, it is reported, some ceremonies analogous to devil worship."

‡ This occurs in several charms. The following (which, though not known to the Singhalese, as applied to *wild boars*, is identical with one known to them to drive away toothache), not only invokes the sun and moon, [789]

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

753 not be drunk. Again, in case of fever a decoction would be
757 given of a number of vegetable productions that were *believed* to be cooling. I may here mention that when questioned as to the exact effect any one of these ingredients would specifically bring about, I could get no clear answer. I found that
[278] both *Cassia auriculata* and *Evolvulus alsinoides* were regarded as most beneficial in fever, but I failed to find an answer as to their direct action. Equally *Munronia pumila* would be considered as a most valuable medicine for fits, as well as fevers.

[755] Charms and incantations appear to be more important than medicines with the people.

I found that castor oil was appreciated and its action understood, but it is curious to note that it is supposed to be effective by outward application, as well as inward. Generally speaking, I found that the local knowledge of our plants was very wide, and it would be difficult to find a plant of any use that the people could not correctly name.

137 In some cases where a plant was rare, I found that no name
824 could be given to it; as, for instance, I obtained a few examples of *Centranthera procumbens*, but the people had no acquaintance with its name whatever. Nor did I find names invented in order to afford answers to my questions: it was a case of giving the right answer, or expressing ignorance.

273 I might mention incidentally, that though our familiar Kitul (*Caryota urens*) is well known, I found the people equally unacquainted with toddy or jaggery, except as *purchaseable* commodities, just as much as kerosine oil is. This ignorance of a source of alcohol may have much to do
674 with the striking absence of crime in the country I refer to, and I mention it in passing, as worthy of consideration. On the other hand, I would again point out that owing to the rigidity of certain customs there is not the same scope for jealousy over women that plays such an important factor in crimes of violence in other parts of this Island. Again, it
361 should not be lost sight of that in the Vedda country small
674 groups of people congregate round centres where water, however limited in quantity and impure in quality, is to be found, and are therefore much more mutually dependent

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
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with muscular grace, performed the flower dance to the Peradeniya god for the favour of crops.

The women of Kadiniyaya slunk into their hovels at sight of us. A man sat scraping the hair off a girl's scalp with a blunt knife; another was muttering a spell over some lime juice for a fevered wretch. Swarming blue-bottles and a most unholy odour led to the discovery, in a covered hole, of putrid sambur entrails awaiting the pot; like civilised epicures they apparently fancied their game high!

Wadinagala, the southern Friar's Hood (the mountain that rose to Buddha's bidding), towered before us as we lay encamped in the picturesque little village of Landegama. Here we learnt that a company of gipsies, some fifty strong, had preceded us. These forest gangs, unlike those of the road, are nomadic shepherds, pasturing their herds in the jungle plains. They hunt the sambur with dogs and javelin. Approaching coastal towns from time to time they barter their cattle, and are on the whole fairly prosperous. But a gipsy is a gipsy the world over, faithful to traditions of snake-craft and beggary, and these are no exception, plying their trade among the poor villagers with an eye to a handful of grain or vegetables. Sooner or later we hoped to meet them, but for the present all the evidence we had of them were abandoned hearths and a helpless pup they had heartlessly abandoned.

At Landegama was a hunter who entertained us far into the night with jungle tales. He described to us how leopards caught monkeys. The animal climbs a tree in the line of feeding langurs, and waits concealed. When one of them comes near enough he springs on it and both fall to the ground. Should the attempt fail, the leopard gives forth a series of fearful growls and rushes hither and thither making great commotion; then suddenly becomes quiet and hides. Inquisitiveness is the monkeys' undoing; at first, uttering their cries of rage and terror, the 'ah-he-hik' so familiar to hunters, they look for him from secure heights; but not seeing him they become bolder and bolder and come down lower and lower; until eventually, one pays the price of his foolhardiness.

Wadinagala village, singularly enough, lies farther from the rock of that name than Landegama which nestles at its foot. Here was a medley of huts well illustrating the various types prevalent in the *Vanni*. The roofs of all were *illuk*-thatched; but the walls were various: a few were made of mud, some of wattle and bast, others of wattle and maize sheaths or of leafy twigs; while most had two or more of these combined.

A sudden shower, that caught us as we rested on the banks of the Palang Oya, proved the harbinger of many wet days to come. That evening we entered Kokunahare in the pelting rain, our clothes, bedding and food deplorably drenched. Rushing into the first hut we found we ousted its occupants with gentle persuasion. Cooking was out of the question; but our ever-ready lunch basket provided a menu of tongue, fruit salad, biscuits and cheese, and a thermos-flaskful of hot tea. What shifts the shivering carriers made for food or sleep we had not the courage to inquire.